

THE WACO INFORMER

QUARTERLY

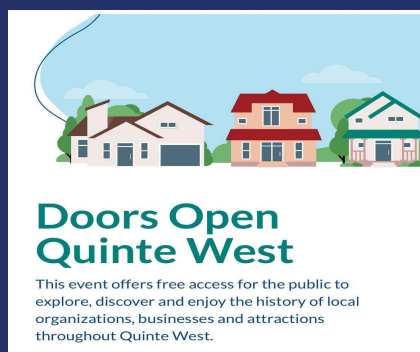


OLD WOOLER SCHOOLHOUSE FEATURED IN DOORS OPEN QUINTE WEST

WACO is excited that the Old Wooler Schoolhouse will be participating in Doors Open Quinte West on Oct 4th 10am-5pm.

We will be giving tours of the heritage Schoolhouse and history displays and providing a look at the future designs and plans for the renovation of the schoolhouse and its return to community service.

Much has happened since our Open House in June - See you there!



A TALE OF TWO PLAQUE CEREMONIES

WACO'S FIRST OPEN HOUSE

In 1915, the Wooler community gathered to unveil a plaque marking the opening of the new Wooler School, replacing the “Little Red Schoolhouse” that had served since 1875. Families at that first ceremony had even helped finance the building through small loans, later repaid by school taxes.

On June 7, 2025—110 years later—the community came together again around that very plaque, now restored, to celebrate WACO's efforts to bring the Schoolhouse back into community use. Volunteers have invested their own time, resources, and “sweat equity” into the project, echoing the spirit of those early supporters.

Joining the event were MP Chris Malette and Quinte West Councilors Jim Alyea and David McCue, who commended the community's dedication and announced \$1,000,000 in federal funding from the Green and Inclusive Community Buildings program to support the restoration.

Throughout the day, WACO welcomed dozens of visitors, many with fond memories of the school or the former Scout Hall. Guests explored the building, viewed proposed designs for an addition, and shared ideas for how the heritage site could serve the community in the future.

(Left to Right: Anthony Douglas, Councilor Jim Alyea, Councilor Jim McCue, Bob Lawson, Chris Malette M.P, Jerry Osborne, Mike Smith, Lindsay Wilson, Susan Fox, Jeanne Powell, Brian Joyce, Scott Pennington)



SCHOOLHOUSE ADDITION MOVES TO NEXT STAGE

In early September our awesome Architect, Veronica Madonna, provided WACO with images of the proposed addition to the back of the Schoolhouse.

The two-storey plus walk-out basement addition will feature new exit stairs to bring the building up to code and an elevator to provide universal access to each floor.

The basement will provide a new main entrance for the building to accommodate visitors using the parking at the rear of the property or the barrier free parking and loading spaces located immediately behind the building.

The addition will also provide a small lounge space on the first and second floors overlooking the wetland and the pavilion and recreation space on the other side of the wetland.

WACO will be engaging with Quinte West planning staff over the weeks ahead as we submit our proposed plans for approval by the municipality.



WACO BUILDER MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

SINCE LAUNCHING THE WACO BUILDER MEMBERSHIP DRIVE IN THE LATE FALL 2024, OVER 90 PEOPLE HAVE SIGNED WACO MEMBERSHIPS. WACOS GOAL OF HITTING 100 MEMBERSHIPS BY NOVEMBER AND 200 BY EARLY 2026 IS GETTING CLOSER. HELP US HIT OUR GOAL AND SIGN UP BELOW!



<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfgt02yZLcRPNIIfvwUOsRDHF3scA-4Dp7I5yrqHL2uYzYLQ/viewform?pli=1>



WACO TO RECEIVE AUSTIN FAMILY ARCHIVES

Local history fans will know how important the work of Leona Austin and the Austin family was to making and celebrating Wooler history. D.S. Austin was a keen photographer documenting early Wooler life from the 1860s forward and Jack Austin continued to record life in Wooler and became a famous Canadian nature photographer.

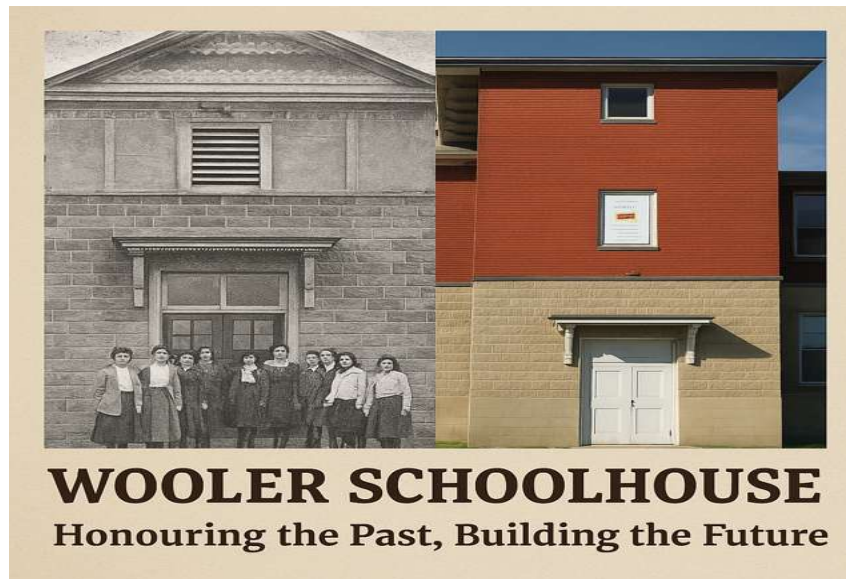
Leona's three volumes '*Wooler 100 Years - Through the Lens of a Camera*', '*As the Crow Flies... the Story About the People and Communities Around Wooler*' and '*The McColl Clan - 200 Years*' are the indispensable records of Wooler history from the late 1700's to the 1980's.

Dianne Brearley, Leona's niece, helped us bring Wooler history to new generations of Wooler and area residents through her many great posts on WACO's Facebook page and her awesome stories from the Austin archives.

In mid-September Michael and Matthew Brearley and Peter Wilkins (Dianne's cousin) will be donating the Austin Family Archives to WACO and our Wooler digital archives.

We are pretty excited and very grateful to the Brearley and Wilkins families.

HISTORIC BITS



If you've ever driven past the old schoolhouse in Wooler, you've probably wondered about the history behind its walls. The photo on the left takes us back to 1915, when Wooler Public School first opened. At that time, the school was just one floor, with two big basement areas and two large classrooms on the main floor, separated by a shared entrance. It was simple, but it was the heart of learning for local children.

As the community grew, so did the school. By 1928, a third story was added to make room for Wooler Continuation School (grades 9-12). Generations of students passed through its doors, and for many families, the schoolhouse holds treasured memories.

The photo on the right shows the schoolhouse as it stands today. Though time has worn on the building, its history still shines through. Now, renovations are underway to restore and transform this historic space into a new community centre. The goal is to preserve its heritage while giving it new life as a place for gatherings, events, and connection.

This project is about more than bricks and mortar – it's about giving back to the community that the school served for so many years. Soon, the old classrooms and halls will once again be filled with life, laughter, and learning, carrying forward the legacy of Wooler Public School in a brand-new way.

How You Can Be Part of the Story

We would love for the whole community to be part of this exciting journey. Whether it's volunteering your time, sharing memories or photos from your school days, or supporting upcoming fundraising efforts, every contribution makes a difference. Together, we can bring the Wooler Schoolhouse back to life and ensure it continues to serve as a place where the community comes together.

Follow us on Facebook: [Wooler and Area Community Organization](https://woolercommunity.org/)
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About: The Wooler Informer is brought to you by WACO
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Photo credits: Lindsay Wilson & Bob Lawson